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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAMAKO 000246

SIPDIS

RABAT FOR LEGAL ATTACHE

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PINS](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [ML](#)

SUBJECT: MALI RELEASES SOME TUAREG PRISONERS AND ONE MURDER
SUSPECT PRIOR TO LOCAL ELECTIONS

REF: A. 08 BAMAKO 00778

[B](#). 08 BAMAKO 00800

[C](#). 08 BAMAKO 00942

[D](#). BAMAKO 00211

[E](#). BAMAKO 00217

Classified By: Political Officer Aaron Sampson, Embassy Bamako,
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1.(C) Summary: On April 16 the Malian government released Amadou Diallo, the primary suspect behind the September 1, 2008, murders of four Tuaregs near Ansongo. Diallo is the leader of a primarily Peuhl self-defense militia known as the Ganda-Izo. President Amadou Toumani Toure had previously promised to prosecute anyone suspected of involvement in these murders. One day later, on April 17, the Malians released eight Tuareg civilians to the custody of National Assembly Deputy Alghabass ag Intallah. The liberated Tuaregs were immediately airlifted to Kidal. It is unclear whether Tuareg leaders are also aware of the nearly simultaneous release of Diallo. The two sets of liberations suggest that Mali may be seeking to ease tensions among Tuareg and Peuhl communities in northern Mali in advance of April 26 local elections on the one hand, and ease overcrowding within State Security (DGSE) detention facilities on the other. End Summary.

Murder Suspect Goes Free

2.(C) On April 17 presidential insider Kader Bah told the Embassy that Malian authorities released Amadou Diallo on April 16. During northern Mali's 1991-1996 rebellion Diallo was a leader of the primarily Peuhl and Songhai self-defense militia formerly known as the Ganda-Koy. After deserting his Malian government appointed position overseeing Malian imports at port of Dakar in early 2008, Diallo re-emerged in northern Mali as the leader of a Ganda-Koy spin off called the Ganda-Izo, which was implicated in the September 1, 2008, murders of four Tuareg civilians near Ansongo south east of Gao. Following the murders Bah, who is also Peuhl, said Diallo telephoned him to claim responsibility (Ref. A).

3.(C) In response, Malian security forces arrested more than 40 suspected Ganda-Izo members (Ref B). Diallo himself was apprehended in Niamey by Nigerien officials and extradited to Mali. In December 2008 President Amadou Toumani Toure agreed to release a 17 Gando-Izo members, but said any one linked to the September 1 murders would remain in prison (Ref. C). "Those who have killed," said President Toure as quoted by Agence France Press on December 14, "will go before the courts." No charges were ever filed against Diallo and no investigation of the September murders was concluded, nor was

Diallo ever placed within the jurisdiction of Mali's formal legal system. It is unclear if Tuareg rebels are yet aware that Diallo is once again a free man.

Released Tuaregs Flown to Kidal

4.(C) Mali also released eight Tuareg prisoners in Bamako on April 17. The individuals were turned over to National Assembly Deputy Alghabass ag Intallah and then flown immediately to Kidal. The release coincided with the availability of a Kidal bound aircraft and upcoming April 26 local elections. The aircraft was chartered by the Malian government to fly the Tuareg prisoners and ag Intallah's father, Intallah ag Attaher who has been the traditional leader of Kidal Tuaregs since 1963, back to Kidal. Ag Attaher has been in Bamako for medical reasons for several months.

5.(C) According to Tuareg contacts, the liberated prisoners were Tuareg civilians caught up in military sweeps of Kidal during the Malian government's January and February offensive against rogue Tuareg rebel leader Ibrahim Bahanga. Fourteen Tuareg rebels remain in the custody of Malian State Security (DGSE) in Bamako. Alghabass ag Intallah, other Tuareg leaders, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have been trying without success to obtain permission to visit Tuareg rebel prisoners in Bamako (Ref. D). Several Tuareg leaders, including Alghabass and Tuareg rebel Alliance for Democracy and Change spokesman turned National Assembly Deputy Ahmada ag Bibi, have accused the Malians of

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mistreating Tuareg prisoners. In early April the DGSE allowed Alghabass to visit with two of the estimated 22 Tuaregs in Malian custody (Ref. E). The decision to release these eight individuals on April 17 seemingly supported statements by Tuareg leaders alleging that only 14 or 15 of the Tuaregs detained by the DGSE were actually Tuareg rebels.

Comment: A Question of Time and Space?

6.(C) The decision to release eight Tuareg civilian prisoners and as well as Ganda-Izo leader and murder suspect Amadou Diallo appears timed to reduce tensions amongst Tuaregs in Kidal and Peuhls near Gao just one week before April 26 local elections. It may also be an attempt to create space within DGSE holding cells. The DGSE is neither procedurally nor logistically prepared to detain prisoners for prolonged periods of time. In recent months, however, the DGSE has become the incarceration point for Ganda-Izo members, Tuareg rebels, Tuaregs associated with AQIM kidnappings, and a handful of Islamic extremists. On April 16 presidential insider Kader Bah told the Embassy that the DGSE had asked the Malian military to assume responsibility for Tuareg rebel prisoners in order to ease the administrative burden on the DGSE, but that the Malian military had refused. Bah also reported that the DGSE Director Col. Mamy Coulibaly was having trouble coping with the number of detainees in DGSE custody. The liberation of Tuareg civilians - if indeed these individuals were civilians caught in the wrong place at the wrong time as claimed by Tuareg leaders - was overdue. The nearly simultaneous liberation of Amadou Diallo, however, indicates that Malian authorities have once again - following the failure to investigate the October 17, 2007, killing of a Tuareg gendarme by Malian soldiers in Gao; and the April 10, 2008, executions of two Tuaregs in Kidal - decided it is politically easier to leave a case of murdered Tuaregs unsolved.
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